(Washington, DC)— Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisc.) today announced that the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) will receive $501,756 in Recovery Act funds to expand Head Start programs. Head Start allocates grants to local public and private, nonprofit and for-profit agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to economically disadvantaged children and families. In particular, Head Start focuses on helping preschoolers develop early reading and math skills.

"Giving our kids an early jump into learning is so important to their future success," Congresswoman Moore said. "It is far better for a three-year-old to be engaged and learning the basics of math and reading than to be left alone in front of the TV. There are so many children that would benefit from programs like Head Start in Milwaukee, and these Recovery Act funds take us one step closer to making new resources available to some of the more than 300 families that are currently on the Milwaukee Public Schools Head Start waiting list."

These Recovery Act dollars will be used to fund the start-up of three additional classrooms that will serve three-year-olds with full-day programming. The funds will be used to hire three teachers, three educational assistants, and one family service worker. The district will be able to open these classrooms immediately. In addition, the district will be able to purchase curricula, supplies and materials.

"The district is very excited to receive this funding to expand our Head Start Program," said Ann Terrell, Director of Curriculum and Instruction for PreK-5, Department of Educational Services at MPS "These funds will allow us to serve children where we currently have our highest demand – three-year-olds. MPS recognizes that the early childhood educational experience is extremely important because it lays the foundation for future educational and life experiences. The district is making a concerted effort to make sure the educational programming for early childhood and elementary school students is strong and aligned."

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